The largest herd consisted of 38 animals. Several fine saddle-backs and brown bucks were seen, also a number of young tahr. Although the herds move from area to area the places where the saddle-backs were found are not given for obvious reasons.

The herd on the eastern slopes around Glen Morgan has been wiped out by poachers, thanks to the ban imposed on shooting and the consequent absence of licence holders who provide a check on illegal shooting. No tahr were seen in the Nilgiri Peak area and it is reported that this is because of poaching by the estate labour. Licence holders will be doing a great service by frequenting this area.

In the Kundah Hydro-Electric Scheme area roads are being laid in the tahr country and forest wattle plantations are also being pushed through. Poaching activity is therefore expected to increase. This seems a crucial stage in the protection of this species.

In conclusion I may state that unless the licence holder is allowed to pursue the saddle-backs, most of which are useless for breeding purposes, and thus patrol the area, there is no doubt that tahr will eventually share the fate of the Glen Morgan herd.

THE NILGIRI WILD LIFE ASSOCIATION,
OOTACAMUND,
NILGIRIS, SOUTH INDIA,
February 14, 1963.

E. R. C. DAVIDAR,
Honorary Superintendent

[Leslie Brown in a note entitled 'Wild Life in some areas of South India', published in Vol. **57** (2) : 403-408, 1960, of our *Journal*, at p. 404, says: 'In the Nilgiris, on the high plateau sambar were few, but I saw without difficulty a herd of 16 Nilgiri Tahr.'—EDS.]

4. STRANDING OF A BLUE WHALE *BALAENOPTERA MUSCULUS* (LINN.) NEAR SURAT, GUJARAT, WITH NOTES ON EARLIER LITERATURE

On press reports of the stranding of a whale, which were confirmed by the local Superintendent of Fisheries, an assistant of the Society, Shri V. C. Ambedkar, was sent to collect data. The whale was stranded on 23 February 1963 close to village Gavier, near Magdalla Port, about seven miles from Surat. On 27 February when the body was examined, decomposition had progressed considerably

and the skin had almost completely peeled off. A patch of skin still on the body near the flipper was slate-grey in colour. Some portions of the floor of the mouth were dirty yellow. The following measurements were obtained:

Total length	20.28 m. (66 ft. 6 in.)
Length of flipper	3.30 m. (10 ft. 10 in.)
Upper jaw	5.60 m. (18 ft. 4 in.)
Lower jaw	4.10 m. (13 ft. 5 in.)

Among species of *Balaenoptera*, the Blue Whale [*Balaenoptera musculus* (Linn.)] has the longest flipper, approximately 1/7th of the body length as against 1/9th or lower in other species of the genus. The length of the animal and ratio of the length of its flipper to its total length establish the identity of the specimen as *B. musculus*. In the Fin Whale [*Balaenoptera physalus* (Linn.)], the only other species of the genus which grows to over 60 ft. in total length, the ratio is 1/9th; the average of its total length is also less than that of *B. musculus* being 63 ft. male, 65 ft. female as against 74 ft. male and 77 ft. female (Gibson-Hill, 1950). The present specimen is apparently immature. This species is referred to a distinct genus *Sibbaldus* in American classifications, a position that has not been accepted by Ellerman & Morrison-Scott (1951) and most other European authors.

It might be of interest to mention some points arising out of the literature on the stranding of whales on the coasts of India. Gibson-Hill (loc. cit.) has commented on the probable species of the strandings recorded in S. T. Moses's (1947) list of whales stranded on the coasts of India and in near-by areas. He has, however, overlooked the specimen from Naduvattum, Kerala, in the list, first reported by P. K. Jacob & Devidas Menon (1947), the length (45 ft.), colour, and number of ventral furrows (45) of which agree with his description of the Sei Whale, *Balaenoptera borealis* Linn., and which was probably of this species. Ellerman & Morrison-Scott (1951) give its distribution in the tropics as Borneo, Java, and Siam.

One very interesting fact noted by Jacob & Menon (loc. cit.) is that the animal had fed on a large shoal of mackerel (*Rastrelliger kanagurta*)—the usual food of this species in the North Atlantic is a tiny crustacean *Calanus finmarchicus*. In this connection, the popular name of the species in Norway and Japan may not be without significance. The Norwegian 'Seievhal' seems to comment on the arrival of the whale in Norwegian coastal waters when the Sei or coalfish (*Gadus virens*) are migrating; and the Japanese name 'Iwashi-Kujira' is translated as 'Sardine Whale'. There is, however, little evidence to prove that the names are in fact associated with the food

habits of the animal. Shoals of mackerel occur along the west coast of India in January, the month of the stranding at Naduvattam. Feeding on fish is not peculiar to *B. borealis*, for the Fin Whale [*B. physalus* (Linn.)] is known to feed on herring and other fish, particularly *Osmerus arcticus* (Sanderson, 1958).

Since Gibson-Hill's (1950) note on Rorquals there has been one additional report in the *Journal* on the stranding of a whale (V. K. Chari, 1951). The species is recorded as *Balaenoptera indica* Blyth [=*Balaenoptera musculus* (Linn.)] but the measurements noted (total length 68 ft., flipper 6 ft. 1 in.) show a rather short flipper for *B. musculus* and the possibility that the whale was *Balaenoptera physalus* (Linn.) cannot be overlooked.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
91, WALKESHWAR ROAD,
BOMBAY 6-WB.,
April 8, 1963.

J. C. DANIEL,
Curator

REFERENCES

Chari, V. K. (1951) : The Great Indian Rorqual or Fin Whale *Balaenoptera indica* Blyth off Umargam (Bombay State). *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* **50** (1): 161.

Ellerman, J. R., & Morrison-Scott, T. C. S. (1951): Checklist of Palaearctic and Indian Mammals. British Museum. London.

Gibson-Hill, C. A. (1950): A note on the Rorquals (*Balaenoptera* spp.) *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* **49** (1) : 14.

Jacob, P. K., & Menon, M. Devidas (1947) : The piscivorous habits of the Rorqual or Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera* spp.). ibid. **47** (1) : 156.

Moses, S. T. (1947): Stranding of Whales on the coasts of India. ibid. **47** (2): 377.

Sanderson, I. T. (1958): Follow the Whale. London.

5. 'TRANSMISSION OF RABIES WITHOUT BITING'

With reference to our Miscellaneous Note in the April 1962, Vol. **59** (1), number of the *Journal* on the transmission of rabies by a non-bite route, Dr. Alan Gilroy, Principal, Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene, India Branch, Assam, has drawn our attention to an announcement by Dr. G. Stuart in the *Tropical Diseases Bulletin*, Vol. **59**, No. 8, p. 776, August 1962, London, referring to a paper published in Prague [Yurkovsky, A. M. (1962) : Hydrophobia following the Bite of Apparently Healthy Dogs. *J. Hyg., Epidemiol.*,